APPENDIX A.
Area Classifications

CONTENTS

These definitions cover all geographic entities and concepts that the Central Statistics Division included in its standard 1995 census data products for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI): Not all entities and concepts are shown in any one 1995 census data product. For a description of geographic areas included in each data product, see appendix F.

AREA MEASUREMENT

Area measurements provide the size, in square kilometers (also in square miles in printed reports), recorded for each geographic entity for which the Central Statistics Division tabulates data in general-purpose data products (except crews-of-vessels entities). (Square kilometers may be divided by 2.59 to convert an area measurement to square miles). Area was calculated from the specific set of boundaries recorded for the entity in the Central Statistics Division geographic data base (see "TIGER"). On machine-readable files area decimal point is implied. In printed reports, area measurements are shown to one decimal.

The Central Statistics Division provided measurements for both land area and total water area for the 1995 census; water figure for the CNMI included inland, coastal, and territorial water. (For the 1980 and 1990 censuses, the U.S. Bureau of the Census provided area measurements for land and inland water). The Central Statistics Division will provide measurements for the component types of water for the affected entities in a separate file. "Inland water" consisted of any lake, reservoir, pond, or similar body of water that is recorded in the Central Statistics Division's geographic data base as a two-dimensional feature (rather than as a single line). The portions of the ocean and related large embayments that belong to the CNMI were considered to be "coastal" and "territorial" waters. Streams and bays that empty into these bodies of water were treated as "inland water" from the point beyond which they were narrower than one nautical mile across. Identification of land and inland, coastal, and territorial waters is for statistical purposes, and does not necessarily reflect legal definitions thereof.

By definition, census blocks do not include water within their boundaries; therefore, the water area of a block was always zero. Land area measurements may disagree with the information displayed on census maps and in the TIGER file because, for area measurement purposes, features identified as "intermittent water" were reported as land area. For this reason, it might not be possible to derive the land area for an entity by summing the land area of its component census blocks. In addition, the water area measurement reported for some geographic entities included water that was not included in any lower-level geographic entity. Therefore, because water was contained only in a higher-level geographic entity, summing the water measurements for all the component lower-level geographic entities would not yield the water area of that higher-level entity. This occurred, for example, where water was associated with a minor civil division but was not assigned to any block numbering area. Crews-of-vessels entities (see "Block Numbering Area" and "Block") did not encompass territory and therefore had no area measurements.

The accuracy of any area measurement figures is limited by the inaccuracy inherent in (1) the location and shape of the various boundary features in the data base, and (2) rounding affecting the last digit in all operations that compute and/or sum the area measurements.

BLOCK

Census blocks are small areas bounded on all sides by visible features such as streets, roads, and streams, and by invisible boundaries such as legal boundaries, property lines, and short, imaginary extensions of streets and roads.

Tabulation blocks, used in census data products, are in most cases the same as collection blocks, used in the census enumeration. In some cases, the Central Statistics Division split collection blocks into two or more parts required for data tabulations. Tabulation blocks did not cross the boundaries of minor civil divisions, places, or block numbering areas (BNA's). The 1990 census was the first for which the Northern Mariana Islands were block-numbered, and each area was entirely block-numbered. This process was repeated in 1995.

Blocks were numbered uniquely within each BNA. A block was identified by a three-digit number, sometimes with a single alphabetical suffix. Block numbers with suffixes generally represent collection blocks that were "split" in order to identify separate geographic entities that divided the original block. For example, when a boundary ran through data collection block 101, the data for the portion on one side of the boundary was tabulated in block 101A, and the portion on the other side of the boundary, in block 101B. A block number with the suffix "Z" represented a crews-of-vessels entity for which the Central Statistics Division tabulated data, but that did not represent a true geographic area; such a block was shown on census maps associated with an anchor symbol and a BNA with a .99 suffix. Some block group records might not have any block numbers associated with them; this occurred where the entire area of the block group consisted only of water.

BLOCK GROUP (BG)

Geographic Block Group

A geographic block group (BG) was a cluster of blocks having the same first digit of their identifying numbers within a block numbering area (BNA). For example, BG 3 within a BNA included all blocks numbered between 301 and 397. In most cases, the numbering involved substantially fewer than 97 blocks. Geographic BG's never crossed BNA boundaries, but might cross the boundaries of minor civil divisions and places.

Tabulation Block Group

In the tabulations, a geographic BG might be split to present data for every unique combination of minor civil division and place shown in the data product; for example, if BG 3 was partly in a place and partly outside the place or in two different places, a separate tabulated record was produced for each portion of BG 3.

BLOCK NUMBERING AREA (BNA)

Block numbering areas (BNA's) were small statistical subdivisions of a first-order subdivision for grouping and numbering blocks. CNMI officials delineated BNA's for the 1995 census, using Central Statistics Division guidelines. BNA's were identified by a four-digit basic number and might have a two-digit suffix; for example, 9901.07. The decimal point separating the four-digit basic BNA number from the two-digit suffix is shown in printed reports and on census maps; in machine readable files, the decimal point is implied. Many BNA's did not have a suffix; in such cases, the suffix field was left blank in all data products. BNA numbers ranged from 9501 through 9989.99, and were unique within the first-order subdivision. The suffix .99 identified a BNA that was populated entirely by persons aboard one or more civilian or military ships. A crews-of-vessels BNA appears on census maps only as an anchor symbol with its BNA number (and block numbers on maps showing block numbers); the BNA related to the ships associated with the onshore BNA's having the same four-digit basic number. Suffixes in the range .80 through .98 identified BNA's that either were revised or were created during the 1995 census data collection activities. Some of these revisions produced BNA's that had extremely small land area and may have had little or no population or housing. For data analysis, such a BNA could be combined with an adjacent BNA.

BOUNDARY CHANGES

The boundaries of some minor civil divisions and places might have changed between those reported for the 1995 census and January 1, 1995. Researchers can obtain Information on boundary changes for minor civil division from the Central Statistics Division.

GEOGRAPHIC CODE

Census Code

Census codes are assigned for a variety of geographic entities. The structure, format, and meaning of census codes can be obtained from the Central Statistics Division.

GEOGRAPHIC PRESENTATION

Hierarchical Presentation

A hierarchical geographic presentation shows the geographic entities in a superior/subordinate structure in census products. This structure is derived from the legal, administrative, or areal relationships of the entities. The hierarchical structure is depicted in report tables by means of indentation, and is explained for machine-readable media in the discussion of file structure in the geographic coverage portion of the abstract in the technical documen-

tation. An example of hierarchical presentation for the Northern Mariana Islands is the "standard census geographic hierarchy": block, within block group, within block numbering area, within place, within minor civil division, within first-order subdivision, within Northern Mariana Islands. Graphically, this is shown as:

Northern Mariana Islands
  First-order subdivision
    Minor civil division
      Place (or part)
        Block numbering area (or part)
          Block group (or part)
            Block

Inventory Presentation

An inventory presentation of geographic entities is one in which all entities of the same type are shown in alphabetical or code sequence, without reference to their hierarchical relationships. Generally, an inventory presentation shows totals for entities that may be split in a hierarchical presentation, such as place, block numbering area, or block group. Graphically, this is shown as

Northern Mariana Islands
Subdivision "A"
Subdivision "B"
Subdivision "C"

Place "X"
Place "Y"
Place "Z"

INTERNAL POINT

An internal point is a set of geographic coordinates (latitude and longitude) that is located within a specified geographic entity. A single point is identified for each entity; for many entities, this point may approximate the geographic center of that entity. If the shape of the entity caused the approximate center to be located outside the boundaries of the entity. By definition, the internal point for a block cannot fall in a body of water. On machine-readable products, internal points are shown to six decimal places; the decimal point is implied.

MINOR CIVIL DIVISION

Minor Civil Divisions (MCD's) are legally defined entities of the first-order subdivisions. The entity that serves as MCD's for the Northern Mariana Islands is: Municipal District.

PLACE

For the reporting of decennial census data, places consist of census designated places and incorporated places. Each place is assigned a four-digit census code and a five-digit FIPS code that are unique within the Northern Mariana Islands area. Both the census and FIPS codes are assigned based on alphabetical order within each Northern Mariana Islands area.

Census Designated Place (CDP)

Census designated places (CDP's) are delineated for the census as the statistical counterparts of incorporated places in the Northern Mariana Islands. CDP's comprise densely settled concentrations of population that are identifiable by name, but are not legally incorporated places. Their boundaries, which usually coincide with visible features or the boundary of a minor civil division, have no legal status, nor do these places have officials elected to serve traditional municipal functions. CDP boundaries may change with changes in the settlement pattern; a CDP with the same name as in previous censuses does not necessarily have the same boundaries. To qualify as a CDP for the 1995 census, a community in the Northern Mariana Islands areas had to have 300 or more persons.

Local officials, following Central Statistics Division guidelines, first identified and delineated boundaries for CDP's for the 1980 census. In the 1995 census, the name of each such place was followed by "CDP"; in the 1980 census, "CDP" was also used. Earlier censuses incorrectly referred to these places as cities, towns, and villages.

POPULATION OR HOUSING UNIT DENSITY

Population or housing unit density is computed by dividing the total population or housing units of a geographic unit (for example, place, block numbering area) by its land area measured in square kilometers or square miles. Density is expressed as both "persons (or housing units) per square kilometer" and "persons (or housing units) per square mile" of land area in 1995 census reports.

TIGER

TIGER is an acronym for the new digital (computer readable) geographic data base that automates the mapping and related geographic activities required to support the Central Statistics Division's census and survey programs. The U.S. Bureau of the Census developed the Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing (TIGER) System to automate the geographic support processes needed to meet the major geographic needs of the 1990 census: producing the cartographic products to support data collection and map publication, providing the geographic structure for tabulation and publication of the collected data, assigning residential and employer addresses to their geographic location and relating those locations to the CNMI geographic units, and so forth. The content of the TIGER data base was made available to the public through a variety of "TIGER Extract" files. The Central Statistics Division has copies of these files, with current updates.

URBAN AND RURAL

The Central Statistics Division defined “urban” for the 1995 censuses of the Northern Mariana Islands as comprising all territory, population, and housing units in places of 2,500 or more persons. Commonwealth, population, and housing units not classified as urban constituted “rural”. In some data products, “rural” was divided into “places of less than 2,500" and “not in places.” The “not in places” category comprised “rural” outside incorporated and census designated places. In many data products, the term “other rural” was used; “other rural” was a residual category specific to the classification of rural in each data product.

The urban and rural classification cuts across the other hierarchies; for example, there may be both urban and rural territory within any first-order subdivision or minor civil division.